

her high spirits to mere politeness; to her wish that he should believe she had forgotten the fiasco on the Mendips.

This imagined salving of his wounded vanity served only to inflame him the more against Medenham. He was still afire with resentment, since no Frenchman can understand the rude Saxon usage that enforces submission under a threat of physical violence. That a man should be ready to defend his honor, to convince an opponent by endeavoring to kill him—yes, he accepted without cavil those tenets of the French social code. But the brutal British fixity of purpose displayed by this truculent chauffeur left him gnashing with indignation. He was quite sure that the man meant exactly what he had said. He felt that any real departure from the compact wrung from him by force would prove disastrous to his personal appearance, and he was sensible of a certain weighing underlook in the Englishman's eyes when his seemingly harmless chatter hinted at a

measuring his lore against that in the guidebooks when Mrs. Devar bustled out.

"Awfully sorry," she began; "but I had to wire James—" Her eyes fell on Medenham and the Mercury. Momentarily rendered speechless, she rallied bravely. "I thought, from what Count Edouard said—"

"Miss Vanrenen has lost faith in me, even in my beautiful automobile," broke in Marigny with a quickness that spoiled a pathetic glance meant for Cynthia.

The American girl, however, was weary of the fog of innuendo and hidden purpose that seemed to be an appanage of the Frenchman and his car. "For goodness' sake," she cried, "let us regard it as a settled thing that Fitzroy takes Simmonds' place until we reach London again! Surely we have the best of the bargain. If the two men are satisfied, why should we have anything to say against it?"

Cynthia was her father's daughter, and the attribute of personal dominance that in the man's case had proved

"Come around to this side. You are incommoding Miss Vanrenen."

The man obeyed. With the curious fatality that attends such incidents, even among well bred people, not a word was spoken by any of the others. To all seeming, Mrs. Devar's cramped handwriting might have concealed some secret of gravest import to each person present. It was not really so thrilling when heard.

"That is 'Raven,' plain enough, I should think," she snapped.

"Thank you, mum. 'The Raven, Shrewsbury,'" read the hall porter.

Medenham caught Marigny's eye. He was minded to laugh outright, but forbore. Then he sprang into his seat, and the car curled in quick semicircle and climbed the hill to the left, while the Frenchman, surprised by this rapid movement, signaled frantically to Mrs. Devar, nodding farewell, that they had taken the wrong road.

"Not at all," exclaimed Medenham. "I want you to see the Clifton Suspension Bridge, which is a hundred feet higher in the air than the Brooklyn Bridge."

"I'm sure it isn't!" cried Cynthia indignantly. "The next thing you will tell me is that the Thames is wider than the Hudson."

"So it is, at an equal distance from the sea."

"Well, trot out your bridge. Seeing is believing, all the time."

But Cynthia had yet to learn the exceeding wisdom of Ezekiel when he wrote of those "which have eyes to see, and see not"; for never was optical delusion better contrived than the height above water level of the fairy-like structure that spans the Avon below Bristol. The reason is not far to seek. The mind is not prepared for the imminence of the swaying roadway that leaps from side to side of that tremendous gorge. On each crest are pleasant gardens, pretty houses, tree shaded paths, and the opposing precipices are so prompt in their sheer fall that the eye insensibly rests on the upper level and refuses to dwell on the river far beneath.

So Cynthia was charmed but not convinced, and Medenham himself could scarcely believe his recollection that the tops of the towers of the far larger bridge at Brooklyn would be only twenty-six feet higher than the roadway at Clifton. Mrs. Devar, of course, showed an utter lack of interest in the debate. Indeed, she refused emphatically to walk to the middle of the bridge, on the plea of light headedness, and Cynthia instantly availed herself of the few minutes' tête-à-tête thus vouchsafed.

NOW," said she, looking not at Medenham, but at the Titanic cleft cut by a tiny river, "now, please, tell me all about it."

"Just as at Cheddar, the rocks are limestone—" he began.

"Oh, bother the rocks! How did you get rid of Simmonds? And why is Count Marigny mad? And are you mixed up in Captain Devar's mighty smart change of base? Tell me everything. I hate mysteries. If we go on at the present rate, some of us will soon be wearing masks and cloaks, and stamping our feet, and saying 'Ha! Ha!' or 'Sdeath!' or something equally absurd."

"Simmonds is a victim of science. If the earth wire of a magneto makes a metallic contact, there is trouble in the cylinders; so Simmonds is switched off until he can locate the fault."

"The work of a minute."

"It will take him five days at least."

Then Cynthia did flash an amused glance at him; but he was watching a small steamer puffing against the tide, and his face was adamant.

"Go on," she cried quizzically. "What's the matter with the Count's cylinders?"

"He professed to believe that I had stolen somebody's car, and graciously undertook to shield me if I would consent to run away at once, leaving you and Mrs. Devar to finish your tour in the Du Vallon."

"And you refused?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Very little; he agreed."

"But he is not the sort of person who turns the other cheek to the smiter."

"I didn't smite him," Medenham blurted out.

Cynthia fastened on the hesitating denial with the hawklike pounce of some barrister famous for merciless cross examination of a hostile witness. "Did you offer to?" she asked.

"We dealt with possible eventualities," he said weakly.

"I knew it! There was such a funny look in your eyes when I first saw you!"

"Funny is the right word. The crisis was rather humorous."

"Poor man, he only wished to be civil, perhaps—I mean, that is, in lending his car, and he may really have thought you—you were not a chauffeur, like Simmonds, or Smith, for example. You wouldn't have hit him, of course?"

"I sincerely hope not."

She caught her breath and peered at him again, and there was a light in her eyes that would have infuriated Marigny had he seen it. It was well too that Medenham's head was averted, since he simply dared not meet her frankly inquisitive gaze.

"You know that such a thing would be horrid for me—for all of us," she persisted.

"Yes," he said, "I feel that very keenly. Thank goodness, the Frenchman felt it also!"

Cynthia thought fit to skip to the third item in her list. "Now as to Captain Devar?" she cried. "His mother is dreadfully annoyed. She hates dull evenings,

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"Now What Are You Gentlemen Quarreling About?"

change of existing plans as soon as Hereford was reached.

But that was a mere feint, a preliminary flourish, such as a practised swordsman executes in empty air before saluting his opponent. He had not the slightest intention of testing Medenham's pugilistic powers just then. The reasonable probability of having his chief features beaten to a pulp was not inviting, while the crude efficacy of the notion, in its influence on Miss Vanrenen's affairs, was not the least stupefying element in a difficult and wholly unforeseen situation. He realized fully that anything in the nature of a scuffle would alienate the girl's sympathies forever, no matter how strong a case for interference he might present afterward. The chauffeur would be dismissed on the spot; but with the offender would go his own prospect of winning the heiress to the Vanrenen millions.

So Count Edouard swallowed his spleen, though the requisite effort must have dissipated some of his natural shrewdness, or he could not have failed to read more correctly the tokens of embarrassment given by Cynthia's heightened color, by her eager vivacity, by her breathless anxiety not to discuss the substitution of one driver for the other.

Medenham was about to disclaim any intention of

so effective in dealing with Milwaukeees now made itself felt in the minor question of transportation presented by Medenham and his motor. Her blue eyes hardened, and a firm note rang in her voice. Nor did Medenham help to smooth the path for Mrs. Devar by saying quietly:

"In the meantime, Miss Vanrenen, the information stored in those little red books is growing rusty."

She settled the dispute at once by asking her companion which side of the car she preferred, and the other woman was compelled to say graciously that she really had no choice in the matter, but, to avoid further delay, would take the left hand seat. Cynthia followed, and Medenham, still ready to deal harshly with Marigny if necessary, adjusted their rugs, saw to the safe disposal of the camera, and closed the door.

AT that instant the hall porter hurried down the steps. "Beg pardon, mum," he said to Mrs. Devar, thrusting an open telegram between Medenham and Cynthia, "but there's one word here—"

She snatched the form angrily from his outstretched hand. "Which one?" she asked.

"The word after—"